

Message Text

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SUBJ: WATER CONFERENCE PREPCOM

1. SUMMARY: THE PREPCOM ON FEBRUARY 23 COMPLETED ITS FIRST WORKING DAY, HAVING CONDUCTED ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS IN A BUSINESSLIKE, APOLITICAL FASHION. APART FROM INTRODUCTIONS BY SECRETARIAT, PRINCIPAL STATEMENTS WERE MADE BY ARGENTINA AND BY THE U.S. WE OUTLINED OUR GENERAL APPROACH, STRESSING THE VIEW THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE POLICY-ORIENTED RATHER THAN A TECHNICAL MEETING. END SUMMARY.

2. THE 54 MEMBER COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ACTING AS PREPARATORY BODY FOR THE 1977 WATER CONFERENCE IN ARGENTINA, ELECTED LESLIE O. HARRIMAN PERMREP OF NIGERIA CHAIRMAN, PEDRO CAMACHO (VENEZUELA) AS RAPPOREUR, AND THREE VICE-CHAIRMEN GEOFFREY F. BRUCE (CANADA), MUFAK AL-BADRI (IRAQ), AND VLADIMIR IVANOVICH KRYZHANOVSKY (UKRAINE SSR).

3. UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS VAN LAETHEM OPENED THE SPECIAL SESSION IN A STATEMENT WHICH EMPHASIZED: A) THE WATER MANAGEMENT POLICY ORIENTATION OF THE CONFERENCE, NOTING THAT TECHNOLOGY
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ALONE COULD NOT SOLVE WATER PROBLEMS; B) THAT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WITH EXPERTISE IN WATER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

SHOULD SHARE THEIR EXPERTISE; C) THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD NOT SERVE AS A TOOL TO CREATE ANOTHER BUREAUCRATIC BODY; AND D) THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD FURTHER REGIONAL COOPERATION, FACILITATE CONSIDERATION OF NEW LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR DEALING WITH WATER PROBLEMS, AND INCREASE COOPERATION AMONG STATES WHICH INCLUDES THE ACCELERATED FLOW OF INFORMATION AND APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY.

4. REGARDING PREPCOM PARTICIPATION, THE COMMITTEE AGREED UNDER ECOSOC RULES OF PROCEDURE RULE 72, TO INVITE ANY STATE WISHING TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS DELIBERATIONS.

5. THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION (DOCUMENT E/C.7/57) WAS ADOPTED WITHOUT OBJECTION. THE ARGENTINE DELEGATE MADE A BRIEF AND RELATIVELY UNINFORMATIVE STATEMENT ON HOST-COUNTRY PREPARATIONS (ITEM 5). HE NOTED THAT PLANNING IS PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY UNDER DIRECTION OF A NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS FINANCING ACTIVITIES THAT GO BEYOND WHAT WOULD NECESSARILY BE EXPECTED. HE THEN ALLUDED TO THE NEED FOR POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE CONFERENCE, WITHOUT SPECIFICS, INDICATING THAT THESE NEEDS WOULD BE AMPLIFIED LATER IN THE PREPCOM.

6. DISCUSSION THEN BEGAN ON AGENDA ITEM 4, THE SECOND PROGRESS REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON CONFERENCE PREPARATIONS (DOCUMENT E/C. 7/58). VLADIMIR BAUM, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR NATURAL RESOURCES ENERGY AND TRANSPORT, INTRODUCED THE TOPIC, GIVING A VERY BRIEF AND GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES, PLANS FOR REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS, AND HIS VIEW OF KEY ISSUES WHICH THE PREPCOM SHOULD CONSIDER. HE NOTED THAT MORE THAN 30 COUNTRIES HAD ALREADY INDICATED AN INTENTION TO SUBMIT SOME 120 THEMATIC PAPERS.

7. AMBASSADOR MYERSON MADE A BRIEF STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 4, (COPY BEING POUCHED) WHICH INDICATED THAT: THE US ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO THE CONFERENCE AND INTENDS TO FULLY PARTICIPATE FULLY IN IT, HAVING ALREADY ESTABLISHED A
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NATIONAL FOCAL POINT FOR US PARTICIPATION; THE CONFERENCE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON POLICY-ORIENTED WATER MANAGEMENT CONCERNS; WE PLAN TO CONTRIBUTE THEMATIC PAPERS ALONG THESE LINES, WITH EMPHASIS ON THOSE AREAS WHERE THE US HAD EXPERIENCE IN DEALING WITH SUCH PROBLEMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. HE REQUESTED THE CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT TO PROVIDE, AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME, AN INFORMATIONAL NOTE ON THE FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE CONFERENCE. THE SPEECH CLOSED BY REFERENCING THE 7TH SPECIAL SESSION RESOLUTIONS AND SECOND COMMITTEE WORK AT THE 30TH GA, AND

EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT THE GENERAL PRODUCTIVE APPROACH
THESE RESOLUTIONS REPRESENTED WOULD BE FOLLOWED AT THE
PREPCOM.

8. AT WEO CAUCUS CONVENED MONDAY NOON TO SELECT A
REGIONAL NOMINEE FOR PREPCOM VICE-CHAIRMAN, SUBJECT OF
SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR WATER CONFERENCE WAS BRIEFLY
DISCUSSED, WITH DELEGATIONS EXPRESSING VIEWS BOTH IN
SUPPORT OF, AND OPPOSITION TO, CREATION OF SECRETARY-GENERAL
POSITION. CANADIAN WEO CHAIRMAN AND OTHERS FELT THAT THERE
WAS STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT CONCEPT OF HAVING SECRETARY-
GENERAL WILL BE APPROVED BY PREPCOM BUT WHETHER HE WILL
BE NAMED AT THIS PREPCOM IS UNCLEAR.
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